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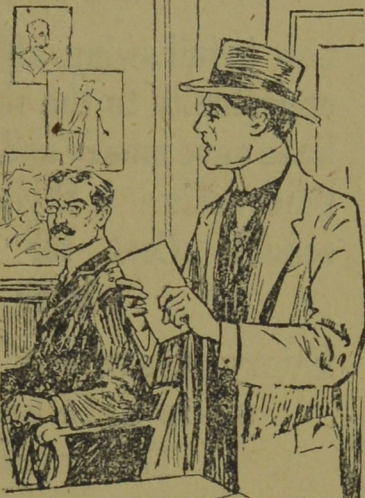
The Lapse of Enoch Wentworth

ISABEL GORDON CURTIS

Author of "The Woman
from Wolverton"

Illustrations by Ellsworth Young

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A Look of Consuming Hatred Flitted
Across His Face.

"Oh!" cried Dorcas, "on, I will go
and tell them myself. They must
know!"

She darted toward the edge of the
drop curtain, then she stopped. A
silence had fallen, not only upon the
house but behind the scenes. Stage
hands who had been dragging prop-
erties about stood motionless. A shiver
crept over the girl. She felt Merry lay
his hand on hers with a steady
clasp that seemed to quiet her. She
could hear Enoch speaking. He had
a strong, vibrant voice. Every one be-

hind the scenes was listening and un-
derstanding except herself. His voice
grew blurred as faces in the audience
had been. She turned to glance at
Merry. Once a look of consuming
hatred flitted across his face, and his
lips grew pallid as gray ashes.

Dorcas pulled away from his clasp-
ing hand and ran to her dressing-room.
She was choking with sobs. She felt
her fingers tingle where Andrew had
touched them, and there was a look of
terror in her eyes.

Alice Volk sat waiting for her in the
dressing-room. Little Julie jumped to
her feet when Dorcas entered. The
girl did not speak, but clasped the
child to her bosom.

"Alice," she whispered, "help me to
dress as soon as you can. And Julie,
ask Dugald to get a carriage. I want
to go home."

The woman kissed the girl's neck as
she unbuttoned her gown. "It has
been an awful strain. I know all
about it—but Miss Dorcas, your future
is made."

The child returned in a minute. "Mr.
Wentworth has a carriage ordered.
Dugald says will you go with him?"

"No," cried Dorcas; "tell Dugald I'll
be ready in ten minutes. I am going
home alone."

Merry stood waiting at the stage en-
trance when she went out. He had
heard Julie deliver the message. "Good
night, Miss Dorcas," he said. "Sleep
well. Remember, everything is all
right. I owe it to you, I owe you more

than you understand. You made good
tonight; the papers will tell you so in
the morning. Good night. God bless
you!"

"Good night." The girl shivered for
a moment. It was intensely cold, and
she drew a fur coat close to her chin.
The cabman drove quickly, for the
streets were emptied of vehicles.
Along Broadway the theaters were
dark.

Jason stood waiting to open the door
when the girl ran up the steps. His
dusky old face was one grin of delight.
He had just returned from the theater
and was growing impatient for the
triumph of a homecoming.

"Missy," he cried, "yo' cert'ly done
us proud. My eoul! I couldn't er
believed de baby I toted yeahs en
yeahs oga ud ebber a' lived to act ez
fine ez yo' done. I used to play I was
yo' black mule. I reckon y' don't
member, honey, ridin' mule on ol'
Uncle Jason's back, do yo'? En dar
yo' was, honey, a-workin' me up till I
clar to goodness I mos' cried my ol'
eyes out. When Marse Enoch come
out en made dat speech folks hol-
lered en got to der feet clappin' en
bangin' sticks en de floor, I clar to de
lawd dar wa'n't a prouder of darky in
New York den Uncle Jason."

Dorcas began to laugh and cry at
once.

"I don't wonder yo's all done up,
Missy. I's got de fues' supper ready
fo' yo' yo' ebber see."

Dorcas was too unnerved to eat. She
swallowed a cup of coffee and nibbled
at the good things Jason had prepared.
Then she went upstairs and began to
undress. She brushed her hair, plaited
it in two long braids, and slipped
into a gray kimono, which folded it-
self about her in sheeny waves. The
coffee had driven sleep away. She
tossed a shawl about her shoulders and
ran down through the silent house to
the library. Wentworth often read
there until long after midnight, and a
coal fire was burning brightly.

She pushed an armchair close to the
hearth and dropped into it wearily.
She realized that she was very tired.
She had not thought of nerves or body
during the long weeks of rehearsal,
with the incessant study, the multi-
tude of detail, and the strange irregu-
larity of life.

(To Be Continued.)

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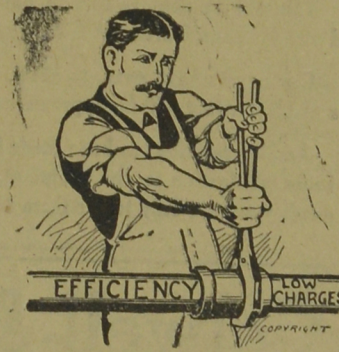
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